9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

all the chaos would come a new appreciation for the task of the chief, and a cessation of the grumbling that the chiefs were greedy.

The Mossi interregnum also served another purpose. It gave the electors the opportunity to exhaust and redistribute much of the patrimony of the dead ruler, which was brought to them by his heirs who were trying to obtain the chieftainship through bribery. Sometimes, a candidate's ability to collect a great deal of goods with which to press his suit often revealed to the electors the strength of his following in the district or village, for had he been an unpopular man he would have had to use only his own resources.

The Mossi electors were always concerned with the health and character of a potential chief, and turned down the most promising candidates who were deficient in any of these qualities. For example, when Moro Naba Sanum died in 1890 without leaving a male heir, his younger brother, Bokary Koutou, was the strongest candidate for the *nam*. Yet he was passed over, at first, by the electors because of his reputation as a bandit and a rebel. We know from Captain Binger, a Frenchman who met Bokary in 1888, that this prince was indeed a bandit and a slave raider. But Binger, although deploring Bokary's conduct, exonerated him on the grounds that the Moro Naba had sent him into exile without any means of support. This was true, but the reason that Moro Naba Sanum did so was because Bokary had raised a rebellion against him as an attempt to obtain their father's position. Bokary was forbidden to appear in the capital; but when he heard that his brother Sanum was dead, he took a force of soldiers and hurried to Wagadougou fearing that an attempt would have been made to prevent his election. When he found that his fears were justified, he became desperate and secreted a force of Gurunsi warriors around the elector's meeting place, threatening to kill them if he was not named Moro Naba. They succumbed to his threat and he received the *nam*. During the customary speech in which a new ruler chose his official name, announced his program for the people and the country, or ridiculed his erstwhile competitors, Bokary Koutou said: "A hundred ghosts cannot frighten an elephant (Wobogo)," meaning that he was not afraid of any of his enemies. He thereafter became known as Moro Naba Wobogo, and he chose to live up to his boast when the French arrived and asked him to sign a treaty of protection with them. He refused

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

of their former serfs and slaves who were theoretically also "their sons." 636

The sons of the chiefs and those boys of commoner, serf, and slave 643
origins who had gone to the mission schools became the first group 186
of educated Mossi. The educated commoners had no function in the 662
traditional political system and were readily absorbed by the local French bureaucracy. However, since these persons were not sufficient to fill the administration's need of literate Mossi, the sons of chiefs and even the carefully coached missionary catechists were encouraged to join the civil service. The result of this policy was that almost no literate Mossi were elected to district and village chieftainship before the end of the second world war.

The relatively rapid political development which came to French 636
Africa as a result of the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and the after- 646
math of the war presented the traditional Mossi political hierarchy with a grave problem: "Who should represent the Mossi people in the new French assemblies and councils both in Africa and in metropolitan France?" There were three possibilities: They could be represented by educated foreign Africans; by the educated sons of Mossi chiefs whose loyalties were not known; or by the potentially hostile educated Mossi commoners. The first hint of the Moro Naba's policy was re- 636
vealed when the Africans were called upon to select delegates to send 646
to the French Constituent Assembly on October 21, 1945. Houphouet 666
[Boigny], who anticipated the determination of the Mossi to support 662
their own candidate, had vainly taken the precaution of sending an emissary to the Moro Naba prior to the September 8 meeting [which the Africans had called to plan strategy]. The Moro Naba proved unamenable to the suggestion that he support Houphouet's candidacy, and insisted on backing one of his own loyals vassals, Tenga Wedraogo or Baloum Naba.[8] This action showed clearly that the Mossi had planned to use educated chiefs who could also represent them in the assemblies. The flexible pattern of Mossi political succession enabled the Moro Naba and his advisers to meet this new contingency. In three districts, Manga, Sapone, and Kaya, the eldest sons of deceased chiefs were passed over, and their younger educated brothers were elected to the vacant chieftainships. There were some hard feelings over the appointment of Sapone, but the reason given was that the new chief was partially blind in one eye. I have no data for the reaction of

9:Skinner E-5 (1955-1957)1960 FA28 Mossi FA28

the Kaya people to their new chief. However, in Manga the proposed election of a young chief over his four elder brothers did cause some concern and talk about Catholic machinations because the nominee was of that faith. But there was no overt opposition to him once he had been elected. His elder brother accepted the wishes of the Moro Naba with good graces even though he remains a rather tragic individual.

The differential treatment that the Manga Naba receives from the administration is obvious to everyone. Whereas the other district chiefs are still summarily summoned to the administrative center, and kept waiting, the Manga Naba sends his assistants to represent him. When the Governor of the Haute Volta came to Manga to make it an administrative subdivision, he was entertained by the Manga Naba while the neighboring district chiefs celebrated outside. It was the political power of this educated chief which was responsible for Manga becoming an administrative subdivision even though it is located several miles from the highway which runs between Wagadougou and Ghana. Furthermore, the population of the neighboring district all complain that Manga's population has gained a disproportionate share of all the services provided by the governmental agencies whose headquarters are there. The fears which the Manga people and the other Mossi have had over their chiefs being Catholic have not materialized in Manga. Of course, the Manga Naba does perform the rituals on the day of the ancestral feasts. These rites are now being performed by his father's brother who has become the ritual head of the ruling lineage (and it is possible that this line may become the line which performs this task for the now "secular" chief). However, when the chief celebrates the anniversary of his conversion to Catholicism at the mission, afterwards he holds court in his house where he receives from Catholics, Moslems, and pagans alike, the gifts he normally would have received in the feast of the ancestors.[6]

The most important function of such Mossi chiefs as the Manga Naba is to defend the interests of the Mossi people in the territorial assemblies and the French councils and assemblies while preserving the ruling tradition of the descendants of Wedraogo and Wubri. In his capacity as politician-chief, the Manga Naba joined a fellow Mossi of rather humble origin in sponsoring several bills in the Assembly of

Some of the more important rulers, such as the heads of the Yatenga, Fada-N'Gourma, and Tenkodogo kingdoms, were chosen by local electoral colleges, which did not have to seek the approval of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou or notify him of the choices made. Their authority, as we have seen, was supported by claims of equality with Ouagadougou. But, with the exception of the Tenkodogo ruler, they were actually farther removed from the main line of royal descent than the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. The autonomous Dimdamba had their own electoral colleges, which in some cases were made up of men related to the electoral-college members of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou. (For example, the Ouidi Naba of Boulsa was descended from the Ouidi Naba of Ouagadougou.) These local colleges were usually free to nominate and elect the Dimdamba without consulting the Mogho Naba, even though he ratified many nominations.[35] According to Cheron, "The nomination of the Dim of Boulsa did not become definitive until ratified by the Mogho Naba, who was always consulted by the electors and who could impose his own candidate."[36] This was not always true; nor did every Mogho Naba refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of autonomous provinces. Whether he did or not often depended on his strength relative to that of the Dimdamba. Once the Dimdamba had been chosen, however, they were installed with ceremonies similar to those for the Ouagadougou ruler.

Like their superiors, the Dimdamba had the authority to delegate power to the Kombemba and Tense Nanamse. Some of them also had the right to grant the nam to a fellow Dim. The Boussouma Naba, for instance, could grant it to the Mane Naba.[37] Mogho Nanamse granted such rights to Dimdamba for various reasons. They might do so on the basis of their relative strength vis-à-vis a particular Dim at a particular time, or because they admired him or were closely related to him. However, a Dim exercised sovereignty in his own name, regardless of whether he was subordinate to the Mogho Naba or to another Dim. In contrast, the district chiefs and the village chiefs exercised sovereignty on behalf of the Mogho Naba or of the Dim in whose territory they resided.

The installation ceremonies for the two lower orders of chiefs were not too different from those for the Mogho Nanamse and Dimdamba. For example, when the Nobere district chief died, the provincial minister for Nobere—in this case the Gounga Naba—reported his death to the Mogho Naba. The ruler then summoned one of the deceased chief's officials to the capital to report on the qualifications of all potential candidates for the nam. The provincial minister, in turn, dispatched one of his own representatives to the district to verify the reports he had received. It was only when this

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[World War II Period]

according to the Mossi, the imminent death of an important chief; secondly, a meteor had passed unexpectedly over Ouagadougou between 8 and 9 P.M. [on March 12th], vividly impressing the Mogho Naba himself.

It is quite possible that the emotions induced by these phenomena aggravated the heart condition that felled him. Certain people have maintained that the Mogho Naba, being opposed to all foreign domination and convinced that serious developments were imminent, voluntarily commited suicide by poison in order to elude them. So far, there is no proof that such a rumor has really been adrift. The matter is under strict investigation.[80]

The Mossi people practiced as best they could the traditional rituals connected with the death of a Mogho Naba. During the interregnum, however, the administration did not permit the usual chaos, ritual or otherwise. One administration report states: "Young people tried to steal things in the market, taking advantage of the old customs, but they were checked."[81] A later report adds that the traditions of the Napoko and the Kourita were honored, and that one hundred persons were arrested for the ritual larceny of small objects.

The traditional Mossi authorities allegedly requested that the deceased Mogho Naba, as one who had worn the Legion of Honor, be given full military honors. This required the placing of his body in a coffin so that the funeral cortege could move through the streets, a fact which introduced a new ritual element in royal funerals. Once this ceremony was over, however, the representatives of the administration withdrew, and the body was buried according to customary rites.

The traditional electoral college then proceeded with the task of choosing a new ruler. The choice was between Issoufou Congo, Kom's eldest son, who was then a lieutenant in the French Colonial Army in the Ivory Coast, and his younger brother, Etienne Congo, chief of the Doulougou district. With the administration's permission, the college elected Issoufou Congo. He took the title "Sagha" (the second Mogho Naba to bear that name), and was installed with traditional ceremonies.

The message Sagha sent to the French High Commissioner bears quoting. Like the traditional speeches of newly elected Mogho Nanamse, it was believed by the Mossi people to contain subtle jibes at enemies, praises to benefactors and friends, and portents of future plans. The Mogho Naba said:

> At the moment when I take command of the Mossi people, I must thank you for having placed me on the throne of my father. I give you assurance of my fidelity toward France in all circumstances. Be assured by this testimony that my father will remain for me an honored person and a guide. I will walk in the footsteps of my father. In these difficult times, my people and I re-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P.179]

[post World War II period]

XI

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

THE MOSSI CHIEFS were neither present nor represented at the Brazzaville Conference, and thus had no voice in the discussions about the postwar political structure of the territories and their place in this structure. The delegates laid the groundwork for the governmental structure, but failed to define the role of the chiefs.[1] Thus, when the first postwar elections were held in August 1945 to select municipal officers (the first elections held in French West Africa outside of Senegal), none of the African chiefs had a role aside from their unofficial influence on their subjects.[2] The Mossi who were in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and who were qualified to vote took part in the election, but the Mossi in Mogho could not vote because their towns had not yet been granted municipal status.

The first election in which the Mossi and their chiefs voted was the one held in October 1945 to elect delegates from the Ivory Coast (Ouagadougou was then considered the Upper Ivory Coast) to the Constituent Assembly in Paris, which was to establish the Fourth French Republic. Félix Houphouët-Boigny, a Baulé chief, planter, and founder of the African Agricultural Union (Syndicat Agricole Africain), had won the municipal elections in Abidjan, and now sought the support of the Abidjan Mossi for his candidacy to the Assembly. The Mossi spokesman in Abidjan, Zebango Pohi, stated that the Mossi would vote only for a Voltaic, and that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou (who because of his father's reputation and his own educational qualifications was now acknowledged as the spokesman for all Mossi chiefs) would decide whom the Mossi would support.[3] Houphouët-Boigny then sought the support of the Mogho Naba, but the ruler was committed to a policy of detaching Mossi country from the Ivory Coast and named one of his own traditional ministers, the Baloum Naba. Houphouët-Boigny and his supporters were reportedly "greatly surprised by the Mogho Naba's choice. They felt that the honest but illiterate Baloum Naba was unqualified for the task, and, moreover, could not hope to gain the sup-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

port of the coastal Ivory Coast population. There was little they could do about it, however, because 'the decision of the Mogho Naba was irrevocable.'"[4]

The election was hotly contested. The candidates based their campaigns on local issues: taxes, forced labor, the lack of public services, the status of the traditional chiefs, colonialism, racial discrimination, and so on. The Parti Démocratique de la Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), led by Houphouët-Boigny, stressed the need for combating racial discrimination and exploitation by European planters. The Union pour la Défense des Interêts de la Haute-Volta (UDIHV), formed by the Mogho Naba and a group of mission-educated young men and led by the Baloum Naba, stressed the need to end forced labor, especially among the Mossi, and to place all the Mossi under one territorial government. The UDIHV realized that it had little chance of gaining votes in the south, and therefore concentrated its efforts in the north. However, no credence is to be given to the story that "Whenever [the Baloum Naba] was free from [official] supervision, he told the people, 'Vote for my friend Houphouët. . . . What would I do in Paris, with my forty wives and at my age? I can't speak a blasted word of French.'"[5] Houphouët-Boigny won the election by the surprisingly narrow margin of 12,650 to 11,620.[6]

Houphouët-Boigny played a leading role in persuading the first Constituent Assembly to submit to the voters a number of important liberal colonial reforms. These included the abolition of the Indigénat; the freedom of meeting and association; the bestowal of French citizenship on colonial peoples without affecting their traditional personal status; the use of the French Penal Code in all courts dealing with criminal cases; and the abolition of forced labor.[7]

There was some discussion in the Assembly of what role the traditional chiefs should play in the projected political structure of Overseas France. One group of delegates held that "the structure of the local Assemblies should be tied intimately to the existing structure of the overseas societies. Otherwise, they would be bogus Assemblies whose decisions would serve the interests of only one class in the society, the dominant class."[8] These men felt that while many chiefs were conservatives and might incline to "neo-feudalism," the new elite of young educated Africans who aspired to replace the Europeans were, for the most part, European-trained and out of contact with the rural masses. These delegates believed that only the chiefs could provide adequate popular leadership, and that the French Union could not cohere or develop unless the chiefs had some status vis-à-vis the elite and prestige in the eyes of the people.[9]

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[post-World War II period]

175*
631
648*
[182]

Another group held that the chiefs need not be formally associated with the governmental apparatus. A historical precedent was cited: in the early days of colonialism, the chiefs had not become civil servants, and their status had not been impaired. Thus, when a chief collected taxes for the administration, his action was comparable to his former collection of tribute; when he recruited forced labor for the administration and the large plantations, it was similar to the traditional corvée; and when he asked people to plant certain crops, it was like asking them to cultivate his own fields. In a word, as the institution of chieftainship had adjusted to past changes in African societies, so it had the capacity to adjust in the future.[10]

Other delegates, and apparently the French administrators as well, felt that the chiefs should be associated with the administration, but as administrative assistants and not as elected representatives of the masses.[11] Since the position of the chiefs was sacred as well as secular, it was argued, political defeat might impair their position as "the fathers of their people."[12]

175*
648*
642
666

The constitution drafted by the first Constituent Assembly (lacking any provisions concerning the traditional chiefs) was finally submitted to the voters in May 1946. Although it won a majority of overseas votes, it was defeated by the French people. The subsequently convened second Constituent Assembly was subjected to a great deal of pressure by a group of colonialists called Etats Généraux de Colonisation, and as a result many of the provisions of the first constitution, among them the single-college provision and various rights of citizenship, were not included in the second. The revised constitution was accepted by the French voters in October 1946.[13] By this time, however, many of the African delegates had become so disillusioned with the French parliamentarians in the National Assembly that they decided to fend for themselves. They met in Bamako in the French Sudan and formed an inter-territorial grouping called the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA), led by Houphouët-Boigny. Houphouët-Boigny was strongly anti-imperialist, and the party received the active support of the French Communists. It adopted a violently anti-colonial platform, pledging to rally the peoples of Africa to a world-wide struggle against colonial imperialism, and to try to bring all of the emerging political parties in French Africa under its banner in order to achieve the "emancipation of the African masses."[14]

175*
648*
668

175*
648*
642
643
631

The Mogho Naba and the other Mossi chiefs, noting the anti-colonial posture of the RDA and the hostile reaction of the colonial regime to this group, attempted to take advantage of the situation by advocating the reintegration of the Upper Volta under their more conservative auspices. The Mogho Naba had already taken advantage of the Bastille Day celebration

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-World War II period]

in 1946 to visit and consult with the Yatenga Naba about Mossi reunification, thus ending a centuries-old tradition whereby the two rulers could not meet for fear of death inflicted by the ancestors. Their project was now received with greater interest by the local Europeans, both *colons* and administrators, who were alarmed by Houphouët-Boigny's radicalism and bent on preventing the spread of virulent anti-colonialism among the well-disciplined Voltaic populations.

Shortly after the constitution was approved, the administration announced that elections would be held on December 15 for the Second College of the Ivory Coast's General Council or Territorial Assembly (to be composed of Africans and persons without full French citizenship) and for the other organs of the French Union. Once again Houphouët-Boigny and the RDA, having gained the support of the PDCI and the Parti Progressiste de la Côte d'Ivoire (PPCI), tried to obtain the backing of the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and the Mossi-supported UDIHV (shortly to become the Union Voltaïque).[15] Again the Mogho Naba refused. Gabriel D'Arboussier, one of Houphouët-Boigny's lieutenants and an important official of the RDA, later charged that the ruler had been influenced by the Minister of Overseas France, Coste-Floret, who told him that the RDA "was no more democratic than it was African, that it was not an Assembly, and that Africans should rally to an institution that was truly African."[16] In any event, the Mogho Naba and the UDIHV decided to oppose the RDA. They emphasized the common interests of the Upper Volta and championed Voltaic candidates, Mossi and non-Mossi alike.

The electoral law of the territories promulgated in October 1946 did not specifically discriminate against the chiefs, but it was heavily weighted in favor of the educated and urban elite. The electorate was confined to civil servants; soldiers and veterans of the armed forces; chiefs; permanent employees of commercial, industrial, craft, or agricultural establishments; members and former members, for at least two years, of cooperatives, trade unions, and committees of provident societies; holders of official decorations; members of prewar courts and councils including the Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture, and Industry, and agricultural unions; Christian priests and ministers; owners of registered real property; holders of driving or shooting licenses; and persons literate in French or Arabic. Candidates for election to the Territorial Assemblies had to be at least twenty-three years of age, to be registered on the electoral list as residents of the territory, to have a good knowledge of French, and to post a bond of 5,000 CFA (Colonies Françaises d'Afrique) francs, which was forfeited if the candidate received less than 5 per cent of the votes in his election district. Many chiefs were eligible to vote, but, because their fathers had opposed their be-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

175* 666 631

ing educated at mission-sponsored schools, few were qualified to run for office.[17]

More serious for the position of the Mossi chiefs, perhaps, was the fact that many of them either were ill informed about the election or refused to take it seriously. Balima states that a surprisingly large number of Mossi chiefs "could not understand very well the importance of this novelty—which is understandable; had no interest in the formalities, which they nevertheless carried out; and somewhat haphazardly designated as candidates African civil servants to whom they were not even tied by close bonds of friendship."[18] Of course, another reason for this choice of "African civil servants" was that they were among the only persons with the training and education required for candidacy. Nevertheless, the candidates included a few educated members of chiefly families—persons who, not being in the main line of descent or being otherwise ineligible for office in the traditional system, had been "given" to the Europeans to be educated.

The partisans of the Mossi chiefs were victorious in the northern part of the Ivory Coast in an election that saw the emergence of such Voltaic politicians of later fame as Blaise Benon, François Bouda, Zinda Kaboré, Christophe Kalenzaga, Tindougou Ouédraogo, Zebango Pohi, and Maurice Yaméogo. However, the Second College was dominated by Houphouët-Boigny and his RDA colleagues. Despite the Mogho Naba's opposition, RDA delegates set out to ameliorate conditions in the Volta region. For example, the RDA secured the passage of bills to raise the Mogho Naba's salary from 60,000 francs a year, a trifling sum in view of his official and private expenses, to about 500,000 francs a year. Similarly, it ensured that Mossi and other Voltaic students would receive a fair share of the scholarships which France had assigned to colonial students.[19]

175* 643 668 [465]

These gestures did not dampen the ardor of the Mossi chiefs for the reintegration of the Upper Volta. In April 1947, when French President Auriol, touring the territories to observe the operation of the new political institutions, visited the Upper Volta, the Yatenga Naba, the Tenkodogo Naba, and the head ruler of Fada-N'Gourma met the presidential party at Ouagadougou and pressed their claim for separate territorial status. The French reportedly welcomed this petition because it gave them an opportunity to clip the wings of Houphouët-Boigny, as well as to ensure the aid of the chiefs in procuring adequate manpower for a projected extension of the Abidjan–Bobo-Dioulasso railroad to Ouagadougou. The problem was to convince the National Assembly in Paris that the reunification of the Upper Volta was in the best interests of all concerned.

175* 648* 642 [631]

The French government set up a Parliamentary Commission and sent its chairman, Jean Jacques Duglas, to Ouagadougou and other Voltaic re-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-world war II period]

matter from events in French West Africa and the rest of Overseas France. All projects undertaken in the Upper Volta became of interest to the other units of the French Union because the funds to support them had to be voted on by representatives of the whole, including not only local Mossi and non-Mossi, but also Africans in other territories, French colonial populations outside Africa, and the metropolitan French.

The conditions that were to have the greatest effect on the position of Mossi chiefs were created in January 1949, when elections were held to choose the Upper Volta's first General Council. The major parties involved in the election were the Mossi-dominated Union Voltaïque; the Entente Voltaïque, a local section of the RDA representing the interests of such non-Mossi populations as the Lobi, Fulani, Bobo, Senufo, and Gurunsi; and a group of smaller ethnic parties such as the Union Lobie and the Indépendants. The campaign reflected all the tensions and conflicts prevalent among the administration, the RDA, the non-Mossi parties, and the Union Voltaïque. Both the Union Lobie and the Indépendants spoke out against what they feared to be Mossi domination, and accused the Mossi chiefs of "neo-feudalism." The Union Voltaïque accused the RDA of radicalism, of associating with communists, and of hostility to the chiefs. It cited as evidence the deposal of several Agni and Senufo chiefs in the Ivory Coast by partisans of the RDA. The RDA, in turn, charged the Union Voltaïque with supporting reactionary, feudal-minded chiefs, and thus with opposing the true interests of the Mossi and other Voltaic peoples. Furthermore, it accused Masson (Governor Mouragues's executive officer) of encouraging the cercle commanders to fight against the RDA, and of jailing about 300 RDA members at Bobo-Dioulasso.[23]

As expected, the Union Voltaïque won most of the seats in the more populous Mossi section of the Upper Volta, and thus was able to dominate the political institutions created by the administration. Nevertheless, the election produced deep political scars in the Upper Volta, and lasting enmity between the RDA and the Mossi chiefs.

During the years that followed the reunification of the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs as such were not accorded any specific status by the administration. Beginning in 1953, bills designed to regularize the status of the chiefs were submitted by Mossi delegates to the Assembly of the French Union and to various other organs of the French Union, but to no effect. The Mossi chiefs meanwhile sought to define their own position. In 1952, under the leadership of the Mogho Naba, they formed an organization called the Union of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta. Article IV of the statutes which they filed with the territorial administration reads as follows:

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post-World War II Period]

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post World War II period]

number of young educated Mossi to merge his party with the PDV-RDA in the hope of gaining a foothold in the Bobo-Dioulasso area and of uniting the Mossi and non-Mossi of the Upper Volta. The two parties did merge in September 1956, becoming the Parti Démocratique Unifié (PDU). The PDU's manifesto roundly condemned the "artificial division of the territory into East and West Volta" and the "classification of the population as Mossi and non-Mossi," and urged all Voltaics to join the new party. In addition, it declared that the Mossi chiefs merited some status in the territory because they had preserved their "political entity throughout African history."[35] The PDU went so far as to make the Mogho Naba its honorary president, and to speculate that he might be made the Governor of an autonomous or independent Upper Volta.

Nevertheless, the merger was to be a greater victory for the opponents of the Mossi chiefs than for their allies in the PSEMA. For one thing, many of the anti-chief Mossi intellectuals now joined the PDU, bringing with them their modernistic views. For another, since former RDA members were running for office in the Upper Volta under the banner of the PDU, the local chiefs had to give up their opposition to these candidates, and the French administration did likewise. This hands-off policy gave all the candidates, even those who were basically hostile to the chiefs, a better chance of being elected.

The PDU won a slight over-all majority and a large Ouagadougou majority in the Upper Volta elections for the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council in March 1957. However, the anti-chief MDV carried the Ouahigouya (Yatenga) area, and an Indépendant candidate, Maurice Yaméogo, defeated a supporter of the Mossi chiefs, Henri Guissou, in the Koudougou area. Of great importance was the election of Ouezzain Coulibaly, one of the early non-Mossi Voltaic supporters of Houphouët-Boigny, who had returned to the Upper Volta after the merger of the PSEMA and the PDV-RDA. Coulibaly was elected on the PDU ticket as a representative for Banfora, a district in the western region.[36]

Unfortunately for the Mossi chiefs, the RDA emerged from the March elections as the strongest party in all the former French West African territories. Because of this, most of the politicians in the Upper Volta sought to establish a modus vivendi with Houphouët-Boigny, the Party's recognized leader. Most of them went to visit him at Yamoussokro, his home in the Ivory Coast, and out of these meetings there emerged a realignment of the MDV and the PDV-RDA wing of the PDU at the expense of Conombo and the PSEMA group. This created a new majority in the Upper Volta, and Coulibaly, an old ally of Houphouët-Boigny long suspected by the

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War II Period]

Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[37]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[38] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War II Period]

go, Sagha's eldest son, and Etienne Congo, Sagha's brother. Etienne Congo allegedly had the support of some politicians, but he was rejected in favor of Moussa. The new ruler was accepted by the Government Council as the "supreme chief of the Mossi" and was installed in the traditional manner. He indicated in his acceptance speech that he was "like a rock [*kougri*] that nothing can move," and became known as Mogho Naba Kougri. A few days after his installation, he appeared in full regalia before the members of the Territorial Assembly to deliver what was probably the most difficult inauguration speech ever composed by a Mogho Naba. This speech will be quoted in full, because it may well be a eulogy for the Mossi chief:

> Over and above the signs of respect shown to the mortal remains of my father, and later the expressions of keen satisfaction on the people's part for the choice of which I have been the object—over and above all this, I see the great interest that the governmental and administrative authorities attach to the role which my ancestors have always fulfilled, and which I am called upon to fulfill anew. Over and above all of these external manifestations, I see the unfailing love of all the Mossi for the throne I occupy and for the tradition I represent along with my confreres. Because the importance of my position, as well as the honor that befalls me, surpasses the meager reality and the possibilities of one man, it is with conviction, sincerity, and faith that I present myself to all of you to tell you that while I accept with fortitude these responsibilities and these honors for the love of my people, I count upon the cooperation and friendship of all, the faithfulness, devotion, and courage of all the Mossi, to acquit myself worthily and to preside not in a passive but in an active and decisive way over the social and economic evolution of our country.
>
> Although I represent tradition and custom in this country; although I must ensure the survival of venerable customs, concerning which we shall be intransigent; I am aware, nevertheless, that there are customs which adapt themselves with difficulty to the exigencies of the modern times in which we live.
>
> This is why, in addressing myself to all the customary chiefs, and especially to my closest associates, I shall say that we have no right to remain passive observers of the reconstruction of our country and of the multiple transformations of the society over whose destiny we have always presided. We must move along with the tide, but in order not to be swept along at a headlong pace and risk failure before reaching our goal, we must stand in the vanguard of the race and lead it at a vigorous and satisfying pace, but one which does not stifle the weak, for they too have a right to life, to progress, to well-being, and to our protection.
>
> As recently as ten years ago, it was easy to be a chief, just as it was easy to be a cercle commander. It was enough to give orders for everything to run smoothly. But today, the chief must add to his title a real merit, a knowledge of men, a true devotion, an integrity, and, above all, a commitment to the welfare of the people under his jurisdiction. It is under these conditions alone

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964

FA28 Mossi FA28

[Post World War II Period]

175* 643 648* 578

It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43] [177] [643]

175* 646 642 666

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied. [643] [578]

175* 643 669 578

The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,